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THE RED MEN OF TO-DAY.

THE antagonism between various races of men is too well known to need much enforcing by argument, and the 'law,' of which the white people always speak so glibly, which demands that dark-skinned tribes shall waste and fade, seems at any rate to be taken for granted. No race, it is probable, ever interested civilised nations so much, and at the same time roused such a bitter, deadly hatred in those who came in contact with them, as the Indians of North America. That the original wrongs which produced this bitterness were on the white man's side, few will attempt to dispute; but as you cannot hold a fire in your hand by thinking on the frosty Caucasus, neither can a man govern his temper, when he hears of some more than fiendish piece of barbarity, by remembering that his grandfather was in the wrong, or that the grandfathers of the perpetrators of these horrors were in the right.

In America, as in England, there are two parties: those who would befriend and cherish the aborigines, and who are, as a rule, inclined to support them in their disputes; and those who would make short work with them, and would exterminate them on any pretext, right or wrong. As in English experience, too, those who live at a distance are commonly the philanthropists; those who come in contact with the 'children of the prairie' are commonly advocates for 'strychnining' them—a new verb, probably, to some of my readers, but one which carries its own explanation.

One of the most famous, or infamous, chiefs of the day is Red Cloud, of the Cheyenne Indians; and he, in company with other chiefs—Standing Buffalo, Jumping Buffalo, and the like—has paid several visits east. At a meeting held at a great town, during one of these trips, this chief was, with several others, on the platform, and a gentleman was explaining the nature of their mission, their desire for peace, their friendly feeling to their white brethren, and so on, when a man rose up in the hall, and exclaimed: 'Mr President, I claim to be heard.' All was dead silence, and the

man continued: 'It is right the people here should know the kind of man you are supporting. I had a home in the West once. I was a farmer; and while I was at work, my wife and child were murdered and scalped by Red Cloud, who sits beside you. I claim'— But further speech was lost amidst the tumult which arose, and during which the man was turned out of the hall for disturbing the meeting. This incident, which is, I have no reason to doubt, a fact, will illustrate, as clearly as need be, how difficult it is to make men, living widely apart, view the troubles of each other with similar glasses.

New America has made thousands familiar with the battle or massacre of Sand Creek, near Denver. This arose immediately through the slaughter of a family named Hungate, and it is really difficult to see what men are to do, except engage in a war of extermination, when savages, insensible to all other argument, are raging around their homes. There had been many Indian murders in the vicinity of Denver; one which roused its people to a high pitch of excitement, occurred at a farm-house between the town and the mountains. In this case, the farmer, on returning to his lonely shanty at sundown, beheld the horrible sight of his wife scalped, and nailed by her hands and feet to the side of the house. Coming soon upon this was the Hungate murder, referred to above. Here a man, his wife, and three children, living not many miles from Denver, were slaughtered and mutilated in the most shocking manner. When their mangled bodies were discovered, they were brought into Denver, laid upon rude biers, and exposed in the main street, so that every one should see them. The excitement rose to frenzy; and at its height it was proposed to raise the famous 'Third Cavalry' of Colorado, the term of enlistment being one hundred days. It was well understood that the aim of this corps was to strike a heavy blow at the Indians, and nearly a thousand men volunteered; all classes joining so eagerly, that most of the shops and stores were closed. Electing 'Colonel' Shelvington to the command, the newly raised corps went in search of the red

men, and fought the most bloody battle in all Indian history. The tribes were encamped at Sand Creek, some one hundred and seventy miles from Denver, and which is a very broad road, or strip of sand, looking like the deserted bed of a river, and running for many miles. There were supposed to be eleven hundred men, women, and children there, and the best accounts say that seven hundred of these were killed. There were only eleven white men killed, and about forty wounded. The Indians, directly they knew of the approach of their enemies, made what we should term rifle-pits, and rude fences of sand; but nothing could resist the fury with which the white men burst upon them. Nine infants were drowned in one trough of water which was lying there; the women were killed, and portions of them cut off and worn in the men's hats, as they rode back to Denver. It is gravely contended, that the only thorough way to beat the Indians, and to keep them under, is to destroy the children, who otherwise will grow up, as a matter of course, to be Indians themselves. 'In Arizona,' said a man, arguing the point with me, 'we always killed the papooses. We thought it more important to kill them, than to kill the bucks and squaws.' This principle was sternly acted upon at Sand Creek; yet one of the many actors in the fight that I have known went against it. He tells me, that after the first burst of the fight was done, and the Indians were broken and fleeing, he and a comrade were riding past a miserable tent, when they saw a boy, a mere child of apparently six or seven years, sitting quietly in the midst of the blood and slaughter all round. The second man called my informant's attention to the child, and asked if he should shoot him; but the other, being of milder mood, took the little creature before him on his saddle. The Indian boy shewed no sign of fear or pain—yet they found that a bullet had taken his right forefinger off, close to the hand. The kindly soldier fed his little captive with some biscuit, which he ate ravenously, and gave him some water; carrying him before him for some hours, until, unfortunately, he was ordered to ride off with all speed, to a distance of some few miles. He was obliged to leave the child, but he placed him under the protection of a comrade. In his own words: 'Bill minded the little devil, till he was ordered off by the captain to do something, so he told the young redskin to sit quietly there until he came back. But I came back first, and when I see Bill, I asked him about the youngster, and I thought I would go and find him; but some of the boys had seen him, and cut his throat.' Such is Indian warfare.

The outbreak of an Indian war is usually terribly sudden at the moment, although the coming of Indian troubles can always be foretold; indeed, there is often a sort of notice given by the red men themselves; yet the time and place of the first blow can never be divined. At the outbreak of the last great Indian war, the traffic from Leavenworth, or Kansas City, across the plains was by team, no railroad having yet been started; Denver, the then extreme frontier city, was rising into importance, and a great deal of prairie-trade was done. Indian troubles were known to be impending; and a friend of my own, having to cross the prairie, was anxious to join a powerful party—or caravan, as

we might call it—and so got ready to proceed with a numerous train then leaving. Unfortunately, as he thought, an accident to two of his wagons compelled him to remain behind, and he lost a day or two; however, he pushed on to overtake the party, which he did, on the banks of a considerable stream. But before he got there, Indian war had burst like a thunder-storm on the plains; he found the huge caravan pillaged and burnt, with many of its defenders lying dead and mangled in the ruins. There were no Indians about there then, but the tokens of their presence were horribly visible wherever a home had been. Almost every farm-house in a circuit of many miles was burnt, and its inmates massacred.

One most remarkable escape at this time attracted a good deal of attention in the West, but I am not aware that it was known in England. A young lady was paying a visit to a farm, about half a day's ride from her home, and she rode thither alone, being, of course, perfectly unaware of the frightful events of the day. The house to which she was going was not visible until she turned a bluff, or hill, when she came upon it within a distance of two or three hundred yards. Her consternation may be imagined when she saw the house in flames, and a mob of Indians dragging the bodies of the farmer and his family around the blazing building, hacking and cutting at what, doubtless, were senseless corpses. She turned her pony and fled, but the savages had seen her, and a large number galloped after her. The girl was riding a favourite pony, which she had broken in herself, and which was valued for its docility and speed. The gallant little thing kept the lead of the Indians for several miles, until she carried her mistress to a large ranch or farm, where some forty or fifty men were assembled, with many women and children, as a place of refuge. The pony galloped right up under the verandah, and the Indians, deeming they had not only the girl, but other prey in their grasp, followed with whoops and yells—when a host of white men burst from each door of the building, and pouring a volley into the savages, killed five outright, and drove the remainder off.

It is of no use arguing with men who have once seen or shared in such scenes as those just hinted at. A man who has lost a home or a relative by the savages, cannot be reasoned with; and no wonder. Within a few miles of where I live, there died last year a Colonel Pfeiffer, a very early settler in these parts, and a great foe to Indians. His wife and child had been murdered by the barbarians, and the colonel never forgot his revenge, and for many years was on the trail, at all possible times, of the tribe which had bereaved him. He was supposed to have slain with his own hands one hundred Indians, and few who knew the circumstances of his calamity would have bid him spare them.

Those who have travelled much among Indians, and away from the chief centres of commerce, have all some shocking story to relate, and, very generally, some narrow escape. A man whom I know very well was crossing the prairie a few years back—the prairie in this article being always supposed to be the great Kansas prairie—with a train of six wagons, and after two or three days, finding unmistakable evidence that they were watched and dogged by Indians, they were very glad to meet another train, consisting of twelve

wagons and twenty-four men ; this, with their own force, seventeen, made up a number too large to be attacked by ordinary Indian parties. But, to their chagrin, the larger body objected to unite, and, having fresher mules, pushed on in advance of them. The next day, however, the smaller party saw them again, for they came up to the ransacked wagons, standing on the prairie without mules, while the twenty-four men lay all brained and scalped among the wheels. They had evidently kept a bad look-out, and had been taken by surprise. The other party learned afterwards from an Indian who owned to having followed them, that it was the excellence of their watching, and their keeping so well together, that had averted the attack which had hung over them from the hour they had left the town. They had a lesson on the importance of keeping together before they met the Indian, however. One evening they had just decided on camping ; the mules were tethered, the wagons corralled—formed into a kind of ring, that is—guard set, and the cook was preparing their meal. The sun was yet high, and the prairie, which was there somewhat broken and undulating, looked as beautiful and peaceful in the calm evening light as the mind of man can imagine. One of their number, enticed by the fineness of the sunset, strolled a little farther from the wagons than was their habit ; nevertheless, he was barely a furlong off, being, we may say, close to his friends, and in full sight. In full sight, too, he was murdered by five Indians, who sprang up, like spectres, from a small hollow, killed and scalped the poor fellow, and leaping on their ponies, got off unharmed.

This naturally cast a gloom over the party ; but they were destined to see greater horrors before long ; for the very next day, as they arrived at the bank of a little creek, they saw a white man running towards them on the other side. He was quite exhausted ; but as soon as he could speak, pointed to a rising ground, and said that on the farther side of it the Indians were slaughtering a family. They pushed on as quickly as possible until they arrived, with the utmost caution, at the summit of the rising ground indicated, and there, surely enough, they beheld a fearful spectacle. They were on what proved to be the lofty bank of a considerable creek—they are seldom called rivers, streams, or brooks—very steep and rugged, the stream running fiercely at the bottom ; while on its further bank was a small farm-house, and a few score yards from this stood two shanties, one of which, they learned, had been used as a blacksmith's shop. All were in flames ; and they saw—for they were not more than one hundred and fifty yards from the spot—three or four men lying apparently dead ; they saw, too, fully three hundred Indians, chiefly mounted, who were yelling and whooping, as is their custom. To their horror, too, they saw the savages had a woman alive amongst them ; and they saw them scalp and murder her. Just as this was done, they noticed one Indian start away from the rest, on horseback, and whooping tremendously, ride round in a circle, holding something aloft, which, horrible to tell, the men on the bank made out to be a child. With another yell, the barbarian leaped from his horse, and held the infant at arm's-length against a fence. The challenge was accepted ; and my informant says that he is sure

it had not been there five seconds when twenty arrows were quivering in its body. The white men, having got their wagons in a good position, fired at the Indians, and a long, desultory skirmish followed ; for the Indians, being of those who fight on horseback, would not attempt to scale the bank to attack the whites, nor dared the latter go near them. First and last, however, they reckoned they had hit eleven of the savages, the main body of whom at last drew off, and they saw no more of them. Can the reader wonder if, from that time forth, every man of the party would kill an Indian with small scruple ?

Not always, however, have the whites such painful reasons for their dislike to the Indians ; and, indeed, my judgment is, that if strict justice and fair-play were always observed by the whites to the red men, quarrels would be few. One wrong committed by the palefaces, followed by a terrific piece of revenge from the Indians, occurred but a few years ago. A train—of wagons, not a railway train—was crossing the plains beyond Omaha, still a dangerous neighbourhood in troublesome times, when, at the end of their first day's journey after leaving the town, the travellers espied an old Indian squaw sitting on a large stone, and smoking. One ruffian in the train vowed he would have a shot at her, as she was the first Indian he had seen, and although a few of the older hands, who knew what travelling in an Indian country meant, begged him not to do so, he fired. The squaw was shot through the chest, and fell dead, or dying, by the side of the stone. The train went on to its camping-place, and not a soul was in sight at or after the death of the woman. The next morning, just as the train was about to move, the alarm was given that the Indians were at hand, and in a few minutes the wagons were surrounded by above three hundred warriors. One of the Indians, who could speak English, rode up to the train, and on being asked what he wanted, said he wanted the man who had shot the squaw. The forebodings of the older hands were correct : the murderer had been seen, scouts sent out, and now here was an overwhelming force of Indian fighting-men to avenge it. There were twenty-five men in the train, but they were outnumbered twelve to one ; they were in a bad position, and they were divided amongst themselves. The Indian said that if the murderer were not given up to them, they would take every scalp in the party ; but if he were delivered, they would allow the train to proceed, and would restore the man, after punishing him, without taking his life. It was a fearful thing to do to surrender a living man to savages, but there seemed no help for it, and he was given up. The train did not move on, as they relied upon the promise of the Indians to restore their comrade, although they supposed some fearful retribution would be exacted. It was so. In a few hours the man was brought in : he had been skinned alive by the squaws. He could still speak ; he sent a message to his mother, and gave some directions about his property. He died in the course of the night, after enduring, probably, as much acute suffering as the human frame can bear.

Another instance of wanton outrage occurred on the very spot where I now write. An Apache Indian of some note—although I do not think he was a chief—called Francisco, for all Indians here have a Spanish and an Indian name, was going

towards his camp, in company with another Apache, about dusk, one Saturday evening, when a man stepped from out of, or behind the building where I now sit, and fired at them. Francisco was mortally wounded ; and having dragged himself about three-quarters of a mile, lay down there, and died. It was supposed that he was killed by a young man who wished to be able to boast that he had shot an Indian ; at anyrate, suspicion fastened upon this person, as was very soon seen. The 'fiery cross,' as one may say, was sent out, and on the next morning, a number of Indians rode into our village—if I dare call it by so respectable a name. It will not be without interest, if I explain of what our settlement—the principal for many miles—consisted : we had a large house, stores, mill, blacksmith, &c. shop, printing-office, a wooden hotel, and a small wooden house for our store-keeper : excepting a few Mexican huts, there were no other houses for miles. The incursion of Indians referred to seemed to be preliminary, for they rode off, promising to return next day, and they were as good as their word. Fully two hundred warriors came in, and insisted on the suspected man being given up to them ; but this was flatly refused. The Indians were told, that if anything could be proved against him, he should be given to our own authorities ; but that he should never be given to the torture. The greatest danger was in the presence of a number of rough white men, who were dwellers here, or had been attracted by the hope of an Indian fight. There were about seventy well-armed whites, quite enough to have gained the victory on that day ; and what the leaders feared was, that some half-drunken or spiteful fellow should fire his pistol among the savages, and so bring on a crisis ; repeatedly were pistols drawn to do this, but the activity of the leaders prevented harm. Finally, a 'pow-wow' or talk was arranged, when two ponies, seventy dollars, and some very showy cloth, were given to the Indians as blood-money ; the red men, on their part, undertaking never to come into the town after sundown ; and if any of the tribe broke this rule, and were in consequence shot, the chiefs were not to take the matter up ; and this agreement has been very honourably observed.

When speaking of the chiefs not 'taking the matter up,' I am reminded that in these days the authority of the chiefs is merely nominal, or very little better. Judging by what we read in books of Indian rule in past days, the chiefs used to be all-potent, but this is greatly changed now. A sort of voluntary, very limited submission is yielded them, as the warriors know there must be some rule in the tribe ; but in his management, the chief is now obliged rather to obey the wishes of his people, than consult his own. Sometimes all sort of restraint is thrown aside, and the tribe will split, the rebels setting up as vagabonds and outcasts—I cannot think of any better way of describing them : such are the Capotes, a branch of the Utes dwelling in the San Juan country, in New Mexico. There is nothing to distinguish the chief from the rest of his tribe ; or, if there be, it is difficult for white vision to discover it. José Largo, the head chief of the Apaches in this district, is a man of, I should say, sixty years ; a very tall man, and a very shabby one, in his buckskin leggings, trousers—or what does for them—blanket, and old felt hat, like any other Indian gentleman.

I hardly know whether the Indians have any system of religion—I mean in their own camps ; though that they are frequently baptised, have 'Christian' names, and are called Roman Catholics, I am aware. Assuredly they have some notion of a Supreme Being, who punishes, and who interferes directly in the affairs of the earth ; and it is well that it is so, as a most singular accident has given this superstition a turn very favourable to the palefaces, and secured their most valuable means of receiving intelligence : I mean the electric telegraph, which is very largely used in America ; and no Ute or Apache, Sioux, Cheyenne, Kiowa, or Arapahoe will touch it. The reason of this is, that some time ago, the red men, having a pretty accurate notion of what the posts and wires were for, determined to get rid of them. They assembled on the prairie to cut the posts down, and a warrior began the work, but, by a most extraordinary, miraculous-looking accident, he was struck dead by a flash of lightning, while in the very act of felling the pole. From that day to this, the electric telegraph machinery has been quite safe in this district. The Indians call it by a name signifying 'God's tree,' and they hold it to be under the special protection of a divinity.

I cannot say whether the southern and western Indians prolong the misery of their captives at the stake for two or three days, as has been related of other tribes. I am inclined to think they do not, or I should have heard some traditional account of such scenes ; but they are, at the very least, as cruel and bloody as any red men of past days. If there be any difference in the mode of treating their captives, it may arise from their not living in such permanent villages as we read of in the pages of Cooper or Bird (the latter's *Nick of the Woods* being incomparably the best book of the kind I ever read) ; both horse and foot Indians here having only temporary tents or huts, which they carry from camping place to place. The women and children can all ride, and they all sit astride ; so, when the tribe moves, on the women's horses are fastened the long flexible tent-poles, which drag along the ground, and form the more solid part of their dwellings. To say that the system of torture is still maintained in some form, is merely to say that Indians are still Indians, but I should hope that in one anecdote told me there is some horrible mistake, or that it stands alone. A party of the Indians of this district, having returned from a successful raid against another tribe, determined to celebrate their triumph by a war-dance, and some of the white residents went to see it. What follows I was told by a lady who had arrived in the settlement before myself ; she assured me of the absolute truth of the anecdote ; that she knew both the women mentioned—indeed, she gave me their names—and that they had spoken unreservedly on the subject in her presence. It was known that the programme of the sports included the burning alive of a child of twelve years old, and two women went out from this town to see it, and did see it—seats being provided for them in good places—as they stopped all through the entertainment. If this last story be true, one looks with mitigated horror on the fact, that within five hundred yards from where I now write, a very pretty Indian girl was burned to death, because her tribe had discovered her in an intrigue with a white sweetheart.

I have referred, a little earlier, to horse Indians. Some tribes, the Comanches, the horse Cheyennes, and others, always fight in the plains, and on horseback; others always fight on mountain sides or broken ground, and, consequently, on foot. This distinction is never changed or confounded. It must be remembered, however, that all Indians are wonderfully good riders, and, what is strange, they seem to ride as well when completely drunk as when sober. When the Indians seek to stampede a camp,* they dash at dusk, or earliest dawn, through the tents, uttering the most hideous yells, and firing their pistols. They hang by the sides of their horses, holding on by one leg over the back, so that it is nearly impossible to shoot them; indeed, in the dim light, but for the yelling and firing, it would be supposed that it was only a herd of frightened horses rushing through the camp.

I need hardly say that, in disturbed times, the utmost vigilance is necessary when travelling through an Indian country, more especially, said an old traveller, if you see no Indian sign. If Indian trail and sign are to be seen, you may be pretty sure that the redskins have gone on; but if there is nothing about that looks suspicious, then is the time to keep your men in order, to see to your arms, and scout well. Dogs bred up amongst white men have a marked antipathy to Indians, and will scent them at a great distance. So, very strange to say, will mules; the presence of an Indian within a mile will terrify or make restless a mule, and experienced western men will rather depend on their mules than their dogs. Not only am I assured of this by so many trustworthy persons as to sufficiently prove its truth, but I have here, on ration-days, evidence at my own door. The mules employed here, although naturally more accustomed to the presence of the barbarians than others of their race, are nevertheless nervous and excited when the Indians come in, and some require holding lest they should break away, when the tribe are passing near to them. And all the time the savages are in the town, the legs and ears of these animals will tremble and quiver as if they had had a severe beating.

It will easily be believed that there is a great tendency on the frontier to ascribe every bad deed to the Indians, and to exaggerate all that is proved against them. I live right amongst the Apaches and the Mouache Utes—the remnants of that once mighty tribe, who gave a name to Utah—pronounced ‘Utaw’—and for the last ten years these Indians have not even been accused of killing a white man. It would have been something if they had not been *proved* to have done so, but they have not even been accused of the crime. That their neighbours would be ready enough to make the accusation, may be judged from what took place near Trinidad, a town in Colorado, but very near New Mexico, only last autumn. Great and formal complaints of the outrages committed by the Utes were forwarded from the above neighbourhood to Washington, setting forth how families had been driven from their homes by the savages, and—above all—of the wholesale slaughter and

robbery of cattle. More than two thousand dollars' worth of cattle had been destroyed by the Indians in a very short time. The Indian agent at this place was consequently ordered to the spot, to inquire into the cases with a view to compensation. He was astounded to find that in their six months' stay there, for so long had the Utes been in the neighbourhood, he could discover no instances whatever of outrages on families or homes; while as for the cattle, a farmer had found one of his cows dead, with an arrow sticking in its side, and had missed another, which he could not find. And this was literally true.

The only possible way to reclaim the Indians must be to take the young ones and educate them, but even this is not regarded as a hopeful experiment. Something of the mysterious and ineradicable influence ascribed to gipsy blood, seems to make it impossible to keep the young Indian from a wandering life, even when he can know nothing of it by experience. All attempts to bring the red men to our standard have failed, and will fail, if tried with adults. The parents, too, in the tribes are not at all desirous that their children should have what we call, naturally, the advantages of civilised life, but which they, quite as naturally, fail to see any good in. They are fond of their children, and are obeyed by them, when grown up, too, with a degree of respect which it would be well to see imitated in the white households of America, where independence, if not irreverence of style, is certainly the rule. I who write this am to a certain extent an adopted Ute. One of the very bravest of their tribe—John, Juan, Pen-a-lis, according as we use his English, Spanish, or Indian name—has sworn on the ‘cruz,’ symbolised by crossing his fingers, that I am his hermano—his brother, his amigo—his friend. I attribute to this friendship the fact that mine is the only house in—well, the town, where the Indians never beg. Pen-a-lis brought his two sons to see me; two very pleasant, smart, young warriors, named respectively Cuervo, or the raven, and something which sounded like Chicapa. They were very proud of being introduced, but during the whole of their visit stood behind their father's chair, never daring to sit down. Pen-a-lis brought me his grand-children soon after, two little brown, wild-looking, nearly naked things. They were Cuervo's children; and Pen-a-lis, who speaks very little English, contrived to make me understand that they were the best and nicest of papooses. I made them and him happy by some sweetmeats, and by a present of five-and-twenty yards of linen for camisas, or shirts, for the urchins, garments of which they stood in remarkable need. I mention this fact merely to shew that grandpas in Indian wigwams are pretty much like the same persons in English homes.

It is common to decry Indian talent and cleverness, but this is only because they do not take the direction we admire. I fancy, if once the clue could be obtained, the young ones, at least, would be very teachable. It must not be forgotten that nearly all the aborigines speak two languages, and many of them three, for nearly all speak Spanish in addition to their own tongue, and English, more or less, is also spoken by many.

Each tribe, as has often been told, has its distinctive signs, but I had no idea that these were carried into such minute details. No Ute arrow

* This expression is pretty generally understood, but to make sure, I will say that to stampede a camp is to frighten the horses and mules so that they will break their cords; since, when they do this, they are sure, in their fright, to join any body of horses they see running also.

can ever be mistaken for an Apache arrow, or vice versa. One always has a rounded point, or rather end, the other always a sharp one. And on the wooden shaft of the weapon are signs telling to the initiated what tribe it was discharged by. This last sign consists of a sort of zigzag line in each case, but being large and small in different places according to the tribe. The Ute always makes his zigzag large in the same spot, dwindling almost to a straight line in others; while the Apache has his traditional carving, and from these rules they never deviate. As for exchanging marks!—why, an Apache will not allow the Ute sign to be drawn in his presence, as I once discovered by the actions of a strapping young warrior, a son of the great Apache chief, José Largo. This young man, by-the-by, said his name was Juan, so I asked him what it was in Indiano, and he told me ‘George.’ I had my doubts. He drew the Apache sign readily enough, but would not touch the Ute, and when I tried to shew him, he put his hand heavily on the paper, and said: ‘No! No Ute!’ and as I persevered he grew more vociferous, till I judged it best to give in. The tribes have, of course, their characteristic paints, and hideous enough they look in them. The Utes paint three white bars on each cheek; the Apaches, three black ones; that is, they do so when they are very careful, sometimes it appears merely a few daubs of white or black paint. The Ute colours are much more awful and ghastly than the Apaches’, as on their brown skins black does not make so frightful a contrast as does white.

A CONFIRMED BACHELOR.

CHAPTER V.

I SHOULD state of this narrative, that while I hold it to deal most veraciously with certain passages in the later life of my great-uncle, Mr Joseph Strangways, it yet of necessity does not consist wholly of matters within my own knowledge and experience. On many points, the information I possessed was unavoidably imperfect, and I have therefore been obliged to draw upon the evidence of others; to depend sometimes upon hearsay testimony; and now and then, but not often, for investing the story with due coherence, to resort to something of surmise. Still, in all essential particulars I am prepared to maintain the accuracy of my recital. And I have set forth nothing that has not undergone a grave process of sifting, inquiry, and deliberation.

Alarm was freely expressed at the *Salutation* lest my uncle, justly offended by the attack of Royster, should thenceforward shun that establishment, and bestow his patronage upon some other tavern. There was even talk of apprising him, by means of a round-robin or otherwise, that the conduct of Royster met with no sort of approval from the general frequenters of the *Salutation*, who heartily sympathised indeed with their old friend Mr Strangways under the grievances he had so patiently endured. Nothing of the kind was done, however, for my uncle was found in possession of his chimney-corner seat on evenings subsequent to Royster's misbehaviour, manifesting his wonted composure, and just for all the world as though no such unpleasant incident had occurred. Royster was present, but bore himself becomingly, and trifled no more with my uncle's name, or with the details of his private life. The offender was perhaps

satisfied with the boldness he had displayed in outraging propriety; or had been made to understand that the company would not brook any further action of his in the same direction. Altogether, peace and harmony were fairly re-established at the *Salutation*.

And just at this time certain public topics came under discussion, almost to the extinction of talk upon minor and private matters. They were furious politicians at the *Salutation*; they held strong opinions, and they proclaimed them vehemently. They were implacable zealots, and impassioned partisans. Happily, they were all of one way of thinking; for, to them, political opponents were as personal enemies, to be vindictively attacked and harassed wherever and whenever encountered. There is no need to trespass upon history, and to refer particularly to the events which so stirred my uncle and his associates. Suffice it to say, that towards a certain parliamentary personage—whom they alluded to as ‘Lord John,’ when they did not, as more generally happened, prefer to apply to him some scurrilous pseudonym, on account of his perpetration or accomplishment, at this period, of political iniquities or public benefactions, accordingly as opinions differed—they entertained the most embittered sentiments, and gave these words to a very extravagant extent. My uncle took his full share in these proceedings; and, in regard to virulent abuse and animadversion, I must say that I think he could go as far, and distinguish himself as markedly as most men. His angry oratory demanded sustenance, perhaps, but scarcely the stimulation of extra glasses of punch. He consumed these, however, and presently fell very ill indeed. He was confined to his room, stricken with fever, attended by rheumatic and gouty complications of a really critical nature.

For many weeks he was helpless invalid, but by no means a patient one. His illness angered him strangely. He was provoked at his own infirmity, and at its consequences in the way of medical attendance, nursing, and physic. He seemed to think some kind of conspiracy existed to take advantage of his sickness, and to make him out to be worse than he really was. Such little strength as he now possessed he was inclined to waste unwisely in abortive efforts to rise from his bed and resume his ordinary occupations. At times, his mind gave way, and he was plainly delirious. He grossly insulted his physician, and expressed the most acrid distrust of the conduct and designs of his housekeeper. The doctor did not mind this in the least, but poor Mrs Brocklebank was deeply distressed, and had indeed a hard time of it. Still, she was unremitting in serving and aiding her suffering master.

The Simkinsons, of course, were anxiously active in the matter. For some time, indeed, Mrs Simkinson took up her abode in the Buildings, that she might the better tend and care for the ailing head of the firm. In the emergency, Mr Strangways' old prejudices were promptly disregarded. It was not possible for him now, as he had once threatened, to go out of one door as Simkinson's wife entered at the other. Perhaps he hardly knew what had happened; certainly, he was quite passive in the matter, and made no objection to the presence of Mrs Simkinson. He seemed the better for it, indeed. He was calmer and more

patient when she was beside him, refrained from the use of unpleasant language, took his medicine quietly from her hands, and was generally obedient to her behests. And the lady shone as a nurse. Simkinson grew prouder of her than ever. She smoothed the sick man's pillows for him, and soothed his aching brows by the light touch of her cool soft palm. Her voice was musical, and her movements gentle. The doctor complimented her liberally upon her gifts and attainments as a nurse. 'I'm sure we shall do, now that you've come to help us, Mrs Simkinson,' he said, with a bow. 'But I don't think we could possibly have got on without you.'

'Poor gentleman, he's very ill still, I fear, Dr Porter,' she said.

'His state is still somewhat precarious, no doubt,' observed the doctor. 'And you see, he's not so young as he was. We can't expect age to bear up against such an attack as this very readily. And I fancy he has something on his mind. But still, I really think he's mending. Thanks to you, Mrs Simkinson. I—really—do—think—he's—mending.' And the doctor said this in a measured staccato way, that was certainly, as he designed it should be, very reassuring and comforting.

Something on his mind? His will, perhaps. Very likely. It was understood that he had sent for his solicitor, Mr Dunstable of Fenchurch Buildings, who had conferred for some time with his client. The exact disposition he had made of his property was not, of course, disclosed. Mr Dunstable was not a man likely to commit any breach of professional confidence. Still, the solicitor had encountered the doctor, away from the sick-room, and some few words these functionaries had interchanged were almost to be regarded as of a public nature. At least, no attempt was made to invest them with any privileged or secret character.

'You find our poor friend's mind pretty steady?' said the doctor quietly, rather as though he were soliciting an opinion in aid of his medical judgment of the case, than as though moved at all by curiosity of an equivocal sort.

'Quite so, I think. There can be no question, I take it, of his perfect competency for testamentary purposes.'

'None whatever, I should say. But he has rambled, no doubt; and perhaps a long interview, a sustained consideration of his affairs might, in his present weakly state, strain his faculties a little too severely. But you would have observed if anything of that kind had occurred.'

'Precisely. I have only been taking his instructions. There must necessarily occur some little delay in preparing the document for his execution. But I have myself no doubt that he is in sufficient possession of his mental powers. His expressions were perfectly lucid. Some questions he asked were certainly curious, but I could not take upon myself to say that they were otherwise than pertinent to the case.'

'Might one, without impropriety, with a view to information as to the patient's state, inquire as to the nature of those questions? I mean, of course, only in a general way. There is no necessity to enter into details. You understand me, I'm sure.'

'Well, his inquiries were directed as to the possible voiding of his will by marriage. He desired information on that head.'

'Ah, he mentioned marriage, did he?'

'Yes; and whether a will being so voided, it could be validated again, after marriage, by the execution of a short codicil confirming its provisions, and so on—an inquiry to that effect. I briefly explained to him the legal view of the matter; especially stating that a marriage usually so altered a man's position, in regard to providing for the widow and possible offspring, and so forth, that an entirely new arrangement was practically and generally the more convenient and expedient course.'

'But there was nothing in that inquiry?—'

'O dear, no, nothing at all of a suspicious character—it was a perfectly reasonable, and indeed proper inquiry. Of a later subject he mentioned, I am not so clear. It was certainly eccentric.'

'Might one venture?—' The doctor's looks implied a repetition of his former interrogation.

'He asked as to the possibilities of a man's being married without his knowing it—involuntarily—in spite of himself, in fact.'

'That was curious.'

'No doubt. But one need hardly attach much importance to it. It was towards the end of our conference, and he betrayed some signs of fatigue. We shall see, of course, how he is when we've prepared the engrossment for execution. It shall be put in hand at once. But I take it, there is no absolute urgency now? No immediate danger?'

'O dear, no. I really think we shall pull through. Still, his age.'

'Just so.—Good-morning, Dr Porter.'

'Good-morning, Mr Dunstable. Happy, I'm sure, to have met you.'

There were other interviews between these two worthy practitioners of law and physic. Mr Strangways' will was duly prepared and executed, Mr Dunstable and an articled clerk from his office being the attesting witnesses. The testator, though improved in health, was still confined to his bed; and his signature lacked somewhat of its usual firmness. But the will was read over to him, and its terms fully explained by the solicitor; there could be no doubt that he understood and approved it, and it seemed to be agreed that his mental capacity was beyond dispute. Still, on this subject it was known that the solicitor and the doctor had held further converse.

'It's a crotchet, of course, a harmless crotchet,' Mr Dunstable was heard to say, 'but it's curious how he harps upon it.'

'But, after all, as I understand the matter,' observed Dr Porter, 'this crotchet of his, or fancy, call it what you will, has not really affected the arrangements he has made?'

'No; but he is strangely persistent about the matter. He dwells much on the prospect of his will being revoked by marriage, and instructs me to be prepared to revive it again by re-execution, or by means of a special codicil. Still, I see no evidence—no shadow of evidence—in this of deficient capacity to make a will. That is your view, I take it?'

'Most certainly. It looks as though he contemplated marriage—that's the utmost that can be said. A man arrived at his period of life does not ordinarily do that, perhaps; but'— The doctor shrugged his shoulders significantly.

'Just so,' said Mr Dunstable. 'The law takes the insane under its charge, but it doesn't concern itself with the foolish.'

'Or what would become of the lawyers?' asked the doctor pleasantly.

'Or the doctors?' grinned the lawyer.

They were much in the position of the two soothsayers, supposed to be unable to maintain their gravity in the presence of each other.

CHAPTER VI.

Mr Strangways rallied, and was soon pretty nearly himself again; a suspicion, however, prevailing among his friends that there was something still weighing upon his mind, and that his recent indisposition had not been merely physical. But he was now decidedly better, and seemed to be gaining strength daily. He resumed his ordinary ways of life. He had been recommended to try change of air, and to pass a few weeks at the seaside. This he declined to do. He had not for many years gone far from the neighbourhood of Mole's Buildings, and he expressed great objection to being, as he said, removed to strange places at his time of life. But he made some concession to medical counsel: he now took a morning constitutional walk in the Tower Moat or the garden of the adjoining square. In the evening, he resumed his place at the *Salutation*, exercising, perhaps, more moderation than formerly in regard to his consumption of its liquors. Once or twice, too, he dined at his partner's house in Doughty Street. These entertainments had passed off satisfactorily. It was evident that Mrs Simkinson enjoyed a secure place in my uncle's favour. He invariably addressed her as 'my dear,' and kissed her whenever he met or parted from her. To all inquiries concerning his state of health, Mr Strangways was now apt to reply somewhat petulantly that he was as well as he had ever felt in his life, if not better, and that he thought, upon the whole, his illness had rather done him good than otherwise.

Nevertheless, his housekeeper candidly delivered her opinion that my uncle was very much shaken—that he was no more the man he had been—that a very decided change had come over him. So spoke Mrs Brocklebank, who certainly had good opportunities of forming conclusions upon the subject. 'He's changed, sir,' she would say. 'I can't describe it otherwise. Mr Strangways, sir, if you'll kindly mark my words, isn't what he used to be. It isn't what I'd speak of to any that wasn't of the family, as I may say, sir. But he's odd, sir, that's what he is. He's got into a way of looking at me, sir—that isn't so much looking at me, as eyeing me all over, and it isn't at all as it used to be. He's sharp with me at times, but not often. I know his ways pretty well now, sir, and ought to, seeing the number of years I've lived in this house. He likes to be served quick and ready-like, without need to be always giving orders and reminding; and so he is, sir, and always has been. I don't think he's a complaint to make of me on that score. I know my duties, and I do them regularly, like clockwork, if I may so speak. He don't like worry, and he isn't worried. He has his own way, and he's made as comfortable as may be, and what more can a gentleman ask for? But he seems suspicious of me—I don't know what else to call it, and at times looks at me quite timid and scared-like. And then he'll question me as to Brocklebank, and when he died, and whether

I don't feel very lonely as a widow, and—it isn't joking—he's as serious as Job himself the while—whether I ever think of getting married again, and soon. It would be like impudence, or what they call *chaff*, in a younger gentleman; but, of course, I couldn't think that of Mr Strangways, whom I've known and worked for these years and years.'

Mrs Brocklebank blushed as she spoke, and wore an embarrassed air. She pressed her hand upon her left side, as though to stay the too turbulent beating of a heart, which yet, one would think, must have enjoyed sufficient space for the most active movements in the ample form that encased it. Mr Royster, it may be remembered, had proclaimed Mrs Brocklebank to be a fine woman, had, indeed, warmly dared any man to contradict his statement. She was something more than middle-aged, and the slim symmetry of youth was hers no more. But she bore with ease and address the burden time had cast upon her; and there was nothing uncomely in the increased solidity of configuration with which the fleeting years had endowed her. The plump firmness of her face offered a good resistance to the efforts of age to score and hollow it; and though threads of gray robbed the neat bunch of short crisp ringlets she wore upon either temple of something of their original brown lustre, her eyes were as dark and bright, and her lips as rosy as they had been even in the sunniest days of her girlhood. Cased in her newest black silk dress, crowned with her Sunday cap, a structure rather of the Flamboyant style of architecture—a lace collar round her neck, which was short, but of great circumference—and a gold-rimmed Scotch pebble brooch affixed to her chest, and rising and falling with it, like a small ship rocking upon a wide expanse of ocean, Mrs Brocklebank was an impressive, even an attractive figure. Her manners were homely, but they were cordial and pleasant. She had, as she avowed, seen some troubles, but these had in no way innibbited her disposition or prejudiced her views of life. Altogether, she was a thoroughly genial, good-natured, and comfortable sort of creature. And I have always understood that her conduct and character as a housekeeper were quite beyond impeachment.

How it happened that a rumour to the effect that my uncle proposed to marry his housekeeper, obtained expression, and form, and circulation, I cannot state. Rumours can rarely be traced to their origin. They are as the natural children of unseemly gossip and scandal, and cannot be expected to boast a distinct pedigree, or to possess decent parentage. But some such report did prevail, greatly to the disturbance of Mr Strangways' friends and relatives. They expressed extreme anxiety on the subject. They referred to my uncle in terms which intermingled fear and surprise, scorn and pity, in nice proportions. They now invariably spoke of poor Mrs Brocklebank—to whom they had at one time addressed themselves in a most conciliatory and complimentary way—as 'that woman.' Language failed to convey the full measure of the abomination with which they now regarded her.

Simkinson, to do him justice, made very light of the matter. When spoken to as to the possibilities of my uncle's marriage, he simply asked: 'Why shouldn't he marry?' Applied to for information, he averred that he had none to give. Besought to stir himself, and do what he might to hinder such

a distressing proceeding, he resolutely declined to interfere. 'I pleased myself; why shouldn't he?' 'But—his housekeeper!' people urged. 'A most worthy woman,' he observed. 'I've known her these many years. If Strangways likes to marry her—let him. She's a good soul, and I've the greatest respect for her. I don't see why she shouldn't make him an excellent wife. And if he does marry her, all I can say is, that I hope Mrs Simkinson and myself may often have the pleasure of Mr and Mrs Strangways' company at dinner in Doughty Street. Let me add, that my dear wife is quite of my way of thinking in the matter.' It was clear that there was no doing anything with Simkinson. He was true and staunch as ever; governed by the fundamental principle of his life, that the head of the firm could do no wrong, and must invariably be supported in all he did.

For my part, I was young, and youth, if often inconsiderate, is scarcely ever mercenary. It enjoys the present too much to trouble itself greatly about the future. I did not pause to think how much my prospects of benefit from my uncle's wealth might be obstructed by his taking unto himself a wife; how greatly the liberality of his marriage settlement might hinder the generosity of his will from flowing in my direction. In short, I looked upon the whole thing as neither more nor less than 'a lark.' I employ the slang term, which then seemed to me most appropriately to describe the situation. My language and my opinions have acquired sobriety since that date.

Meanwhile, it was doubtful whether my uncle was fully informed of the reports spread abroad in relation to him and his intentions. Interrogation of him was not, of course, to be thought of for a moment. Nor do I think that any questions were addressed directly to Mrs Brocklebank upon the subject. People were indeed afraid to whisper, so to say, lest they should bring down upon them an avalanche. They could but wait and watch, hope and fear. To move was possibly to evoke the fury of Mr Strangways; or to rouse the inimical influence of Mrs Brocklebank. It was as though they were locked up in a dark china closet; activity might involve the destruction of precious property; there was no help for it but to keep still until some one brought a light and opened the door.

Certainly, about this time Mr Strangways' conduct, as I am about to shew, was curious, if not inexplicable.

There had been for many years in the employment of the firm of Strangways and Simkinson a man intrusted with various important duties in the cellars, who was known uniformly and simply as Bat. Whether this was his Christian or surname, or simply a nickname, I am unable to state. He appeared to own no other appellation. Bat enjoyed a good reputation for steadiness and fidelity, and was even said to know more about his employers' stock in trade, its value, quality, and disposition, than they did themselves. But his appearance was not prepossessing. An accident had deprived him of the sight of one eye, which remained partially closed, as though he had been paralysed in the act of winking, and his eyelid had thenceforward been fixed in one position. This misfortune gave something of a tipsy look to his face, enhanced by a certain flush that perpetually imbued his rudely shaped features, and by his invariable huskiness of speech, attributable, no

doubt, to his long occupancy of the firm's cellars, and his habitually breathing an atmosphere heavily laden with vinous fumes. At the same time, it was well understood that Bat was not chargeable with intemperance; and that, although in the daylight he wore a dazed and confused air, like an owl in sunshine, in underground regions his faculties were sufficiently clear and alert. It was perhaps unavoidable that cobwebs, and mildew, and mould should cling to him; that the stains of spilt wine should variegate his attire; and that generally what may be called a cavernous odour should always attend him. He dressed in a corduroy suit, with a rubbed and ragged leathern apron and breast-plate; a rectangular brown paper-cap usually crowning him. He was ordinarily to be found in the cellars bearing in his hand a long piece of timber, affixed to which was a swaling blackened stump of tallow-candle, which fitfully illumined the vaults.

As a servant of many years' standing, Bat was supposed to enjoy the peculiar favour and confidence of Mr Strangways, who rarely passed a day without some brief converse with his old established cellar-man. The fact that Bat's speech and bearing were of an unpolished kind, in no way affected my uncle's view of him, except that it, perhaps, rather promoted a favourable consideration of him; for my uncle, inclined to oddity himself, was well disposed towards a fair measure of it in others.

One day, Mr Strangways and Bat were standing in a sequestered corner of the vaults, just where a very choice hoard of old Madeira had been deposited. Both had been silent for some minutes, gazing admiringly at the rows upon rows of bottles, revealed in a sort of flickering way by the unsteady wavings of Bat's candle.

'What do you think of Mrs Brocklebank, Bat?' demanded my uncle suddenly.

'Mrs Brocklebank?' echoed Bat. At the moment, he thought of her confusedly, less as a woman than as some sort of wine; for they had a way in the cellar of referring to various vintages by the names of their original shippers and importers: thus, they talked of 'Potter's Madeira,' of 'Old Rumbold's,' of 'Topstone Brothers'; and so on.

'Is she a fine woman?' Mr Strangways pursued.

'She may be,' said Bat musingly. 'Yes—now you mention it, she would perhaps be considered a fine woman. But she's been younger.'

'Else she wouldn't be what she is.' Which, no doubt, was true. 'She's none the worse for age.'

'Perhaps not. She's kep' her colour.' Bat was perhaps still thinking of wines.

'And she's gained body.' Mr Strangways' eyes twinkled curiously as he said this.

'I suppose she has,' said Bat quite gravely. 'That's in her favour.'

'Sound and choice, I call her,' continued my uncle. 'No crust—to any objectionable extent.'

'I've no doubt you're right, guv'nor.' Here Bat removed his paper-cap, and rubbed his bald head with a dingy, stringy-looking handkerchief; his facial expression betrayed that, to his thinking, the conversation had its bewildering side.

'A man might do worse than make her his wife,' suggested Mr Strangways.

'Perhaps. He might chuck himself off London Bridge.'

My uncle blinked. 'But if it was made worth his while?'

'It couldn't hardly be,' said Bat simply—'not to chuck himself off the bridge. Not unless he was a diver by trade,' he added, after a moment's reflection.

'Marry her!' whispered my uncle mysteriously, as he clutched Bat's arm.

'Me?'

'You! She's a fine woman. You own it; all admit it. I'll settle a round sum on her. It will be a good thing for you, Bat.'

Bat shook himself free of his master's grasp, and staggered back a few paces, shedding round him quite a shower of hot tallow-drops from his swaling candle.

'It couldn't be done,' he said, with a kind of gasp.

'Pish! Don't be a fool, Bat. Take another look at her.'

'Well, I will. That can't hurt me, anyhow.'

'I should think not. As fine a woman as was ever seen. A good round sum, Bat; and an annuity—a very nice annuity—paid quarterly. Bat, do you hear? Quarterly. Think of it, Bat.'

'As you've set your mind on it, guv'nor, I will.'

'That's right. I'll speak to you again about it, Bat.' And they parted.

A day or two later, they again chanced to be in the same remote corner of the cellars.

'I've been thinking over that what you talked about t' other day, guv'nor,' began Bat.

'And you've looked at her?'

'Yes—I've looked at her. I've nothing to say against her looks.' Plainly, Bat regarded these as matters of quite inferior detail. 'There's plenty of her; I don't deny that.'

'Well?'

'But it's a risk, you know, guv'nor—a precious risk.'

'Of course, it's a risk; everything's a risk. It's a risk to put out your hand or your foot; it's a risk to go to bed—you may be burned alive in it; it's a risk to shave—you may cut yourself; it's a risk to wash your face—you may catch cold.'

Bat appeared to think these arguments irrelevant, and of little worth. 'You see there's the law,' he said.

'What's the law got to do with it?'

'The law's agin me, I'm thinking. And when the law's agin a man, it's apt to drop upon him at odd times uncommon heavy.'

'Don't talk nonsense, Bat.'

'Maybe it's nonsense—I don't say it isn't; but the law calls it *bigamy*.'

'*Bigamy!*' It was Mr Strangways' turn to start back with surprise. 'Do you mean to say you've got a wife already?'

'Well, I have, and children; and that's the truth.'

'You scoundrel!' cried my uncle in a passion; 'you've always said you were single.'

'I have; I don't deny it. You were always so partikler hard-mouthed about married men; and you give it tongue too—it's made me shiver to hear you, at times. And Mr Simkinson, he was pretty near as bad. Whether he's changed his opinion now he's married himself, is more than I can tell you. There's some as marries and likes it; and there's some as marries and only pretends to like it, because they wouldn't have folks jeering at 'em. Perhaps there's more of the last than the first. But I ain't called upon to speak to that. As

I said, I'm married myself, for good or bad. Because of your way of going on, I kep' it from you—bottled up, as I may say; but now the cork's out. You've screwed the truth from me. If you don't like the taste of it, I don't know as I can help it.'

'You're a scoundrel, Bat!' my uncle repeated.

'Now, look here, guv'nor!' cried Bat appealingly. 'Don't let's have no quarrelling, nor no ill blood between us, after all these long years of peace and good-will; it wouldn't be right. I want to act fair, and do what I can to make things pleasant. Only say the word, and let's have the matter square before us. Are you so much set upon having me marry this here Mrs Brocklebank? Will you stand by me if I do it? I won't say that the bit of money and that there annuity you spoke of don't tempt me, because, perhaps, when all's told, it do. I'm poor—I don't care who knows it—and money's a object to me. Still, it isn't only that. If so be that you desire it, and will promise to abide by me and help me through the consequences, there, as I'm an honest man, I'll risk it; I'll marry the woman. And if the law likes to call it *bigamy*, or what not—why, let it, that's the law's affair, and I don't care—no, not a pinch of snuff for it.'

At this iniquitous proposal, Mr Strangways, with an oath, pushed his cellarman away from him, and, furious with passion, quitted the wine-vaults.

Bat's bewilderment was extreme. His offer—shameful as it was—had been made in perfect good faith; it was, in the main, begotten of his desire to oblige his master, although some regard for self-interest no doubt possessed him. Still, he seemed to appreciate the fact, that the course of conduct he suggested had its perils as well as its profits. Altogether, I think he was chiefly influenced by a kind of feudal fidelity he cherished towards his employer. For some time he seemed incapable of speech, or even of thought.

'That's the worst of gentlefolks,' he murmured at length; 'there's no understanding them, and there's no pleasing of them.'

He shook himself like a wet dog, by way of rousing his faculties to a keener and more collected sense of his situation. Presently, his face brightened; it was almost as though an idea had occurred to him.

A WEST COUNTRY HUMORIST.

Poems written in a local dialect are for the most part far from attractive; their quaintness is often their only merit, and when we have deciphered the meaning that is wrapped up in such uncouth terms, our satisfaction ends there. The nut is cracked, and the kernel is found; but, like skinning shrimps, the result does not repay us for our trouble. The poems of Mr Barnes form almost the only exception to this rule that we can at present call to mind.

A little volume that has been brought under our notice, entitled *Rhymes in the West of England Dialect*, however, pleads with some reason to be excluded from this sweeping censure. Its author is one 'Agrikler,' as he classically calls himself, and his motto is classical also:

O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint Agricolas,

of which he offers this free ‘Zomerzethshire Translation:’

Thee’rt a lucky fellow, Agrikler, of thee dedst but knawt.

Whether this be the language, as Agrikler assures us it was, ‘in which King Alfred thought and spoke,’ seems to us not so certain as that Fielding’s Parson Trulliber used it, ‘and by so doing, did his part towards bringing it into disgrace.’ Our author, like Mr Barnes, has set himself the task of redeeming it, though, it must be confessed, after a very different fashion. With regard to style and phraseology, he allows that he does not follow Lindley Murray; but then Lindley Murray ‘did not create the language, and what business had he to lay down arbitrary rules for writing and speaking it in direct opposition to the practice of nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand to whom it belonged?’ To this amusing argument, if we did not know it came from Zomerzethshire, we should certainly ascribe a Transatlantic origin; and it is curious how throughout the book, which has considerable humour, the same vein of mingled common-sense and absurdity runs which we see in Sam Slick, and more especially in the Yankee humorists. Without going to the length of writing a grammar in opposition to that of Lindley Murray, Agrikler gives us some examples in his preface of what he could do in that way, if he had a mind.

Example 1.—Two negatives are *not* equivalent to an affirmative, and do *not* neutralise each other. When a West of England young lady says: “No, I wunt,” with an emphasis on each word, it must not be inferred that she means yes, but rather that it is quite useless to repeat the proposal.

Example 2.—A verb does *not* necessarily agree with its nominative in number and person, and as a proof of this, Agrikler gives an amended conjugation of the verb To Be:

INDICATIVE MOOD.

Present Tense.

Singular.	Plural.
1. I be.	1. We’m.
2. Thee beest.	2. You’m.
3. He, she, or it be.	3. Thay’m.

Past Tense.

Singular.	Plural.
1. I wer.	1. We was.
2. Thee wert.	2. You was.
3. He, she, or it wer.	3. Thay was.

FINIKIN MOOD.

‘(Used by those who were supposed to have received a superior education, or to have moved in a higher class of society.)

Present Tense.

Singular.	Plural.
1. I are.	1. We ham.
2. You ham.	2. You ham.
3. He, she, or it are.	3. Thay ham.

QUERE-LOUS MOOD.

Singular.	Plural.
1. Be I?	1. Be us?
2. Beest?	2. Be ye?
3. Be-a, or Ezza?	3. Be um? or Es um?

Future Tense.

Singular.	Plural.
1. Wool I?	1. Wool us?
2. Woot?	2. Woolay?
3. Wool-a?	3. Woolum?

IMPERATIVE MOOD.

Singular.	Plural.
1. Let I be.	1. Let we be.
2. Theed’t better be.	2. You’d better be.
3. Miate he, she, or un be.	3. Miate thay be.

POTENTIAL MOOD.

Singular.	Plural.
1. I mid mebby ha bin.	1. We mid mebby a bin.
2. Thee midst mebby ha bin.	2. You mid mebby ha bin.
3. He mid mebby a bin.	3. Thay mid mebby ha bin.

SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD.

Singular.	Plural.
1. Spooasin I be?	1. Spooasin we be?
2. Spooasin thee beest?	2. Spooasin you’m?
3. Spooasin a wer?	3. Spooasin thaim?

In parts of Gloucestershire and Wiltshire, it seems, all pronouns in the third person are masculine, unless applied to one of three things, a hare, a gun, or a tom-cat, which are invariably spoken of as *she*. ‘It is probably for this reason that it is considered disrespectful to designate a lady by the same appellation—instead of saying: “She did it,” say: “Her done it.” The pronoun “it” is seldom if ever used except in the objective, and then often changed to “un.”’

Some very expressive words used in that important tract of country, the west of England, have been overlooked by Johnson (who was a Cockney) and others (who were little better) altogether: such as ‘mesh or nash, susceptible of cold; jonick, one of the right sort; jestabout, very much so’ [this is less local than the author imagines it to be]; ‘and naishun, rather more than very much so’ [but not on any account to be considered an abbreviation]. With this introduction, and an apology for his ignorance of the Latin tongue (which we grant at once), our author plunges at once into ‘Proverbel Feelossify,’ wherein he shews the excellent Tupper to have been surpassed by his pupil.

No man es wise athout a wife—that’s true and not no viction,
Vor the verry peth o’ wisdom es got at by conter-
diction,
And that’s one raisin wy I beant zo wise as Zolo-
mon!

Becas they zay he’d lots o’ wives and I got only
one;

But swipre o’ Zolomon’s example meake one wife
suffize,

Vor teant by no means elthy to be moor than
common wise.

No man es wise as thunks he is—jest tiake that as a
rule—

And a self-appwintted taicher es vust-cuzzen to a
wool . . .

When a man do brag o’ honesty (noa zign can well
be wuss),

Button up yer britches pocket, and be keerful o’
yer puss.

Two thengs come awver I like a leech that's touched wi sault,
A judge as shaws no marcy, and a man without a fault:
And as vor faultless wimmen, perhaps *you* mid a zeen um,
But them o' that zort mooastly dies afor ther mothers wean um.
If you wants to borry money, and hant got nor a vriend,
Dooant never goo to them chaps as do advertise to lend;
And ef you've money got to lend, jest tiake a vriendly hent,
And never lend to he as offers twenty-vive per cent.
Vor even ef it should be paid, it only proaves the rule,
One o' the two must be a roague, and tother one a vool. . . .

Wi' regard to wars and vitins, I mid be rong or right,
But one theng's party clear, it tiakes two to make a vight;
And as vor miakin one o' thay, I'd never hev a roun',
'Less I were shour and sartain I end knock tha tother down.
And ef the tother wer the siame opinion as I,
He'd be a blessed vool to stick up there and let ma try.
Zo ef my plan wer carried out by boooth the grate and smaal,
I somehow think there'd never be noa vitin not at all.
Devence but not deviance en noo onmanein whim—
Doant never vight—but allus kip yerself in vightin trim.

But these noble sentiments are after all but abstractions. It is when he has dropped his philosophy, and becomes practical, that Agrikler is most worth listening to. In the west of England, it seems, 'coortship' is a very popular occupation, and the following poem on that subject, if it does not meet every case, exhausts those which it does deal with pretty completely :

When you'm grawin yer gooseberry beard, or vortin begins ta improve with ye,
Dooant be a jackass outright, and thenk *all* tha maids be in love with ye.
Stick up to one at a time, and lest ya shud get in disgracie, man,
Dooant hev too many at once, but jest one or two in a placie, man.
Ef yo mians marrise at once, and wish ta be blessed wi' a true Mary,
No need o' spoortin kid gloaves, or stenkin yerself wi' perfumery.
Dooant run in debt wi' yer taailor, nor be zuch a vool as zuppoase, man.
Ef tha maaidens zeet nothin in you, thay'll zee very much in yer cloose, man. . . .
When yo goos ta a chapel or church, especially wher thers low benches,
Dooant stick up gaakin about, and cockin yer eye at the wenches.
The ould fashund high backid pews, wer rear uns to hev some fine spoort in,
But thaw volks goo to church to get married, thay shoodent goo ther to get coortin.
Wen yo goos poppin the question, be keerful and mind wher yer placie es,
Zome got the brass in ther pockuts—zome cars et al in ther faces.

I shud luk vor a maaid wi' zome brass, ef tha maiden herself I wer pleased at;
The wife es tha prinsipal theng, but the moaney mun yent to be sneezed at.
Ta zay yo dooant want what yo do, et es but a lie and a mockery,
Vor young volks can't live upon loave, thay want ta buy tiabes and crockery. . . .

Spoasin et comes ta this here—yo mid thenk yerzelf pertty and clever,
But tha maaid as yo wants ta hev you, *won't* hev ye at noo price whatever;
Mebby she got zome one else, and dooant keer ta fleng up a trump at ye;
Mebby yo beecant no girl ketch—not vor a maaiden to jump at ye;
Mebby she'd hev ye in time, but then you'n be loath to depend on't;
Mebby she won't cas she won't, and as zomebody zed thers an end on't.
Never goo miakin a fuss—never goo bein a flat, man,
Never goo cuttin yer droat, ef yo'd got aal tha lives of a cat, man.
Never faul out wi' yer vittles, lest in yer waskit yo shrenk, man;
Dooant try tha stupid ould plan, of drownin yer love in the druk, man.
Never goo out o' yer mind, vor one individual beauty,
Thaw she be ontrue or onkind, you'll vind plenty moar as ull suit ye.
Waait tell tha right un turns up, and then you'll vind thers noe doubt ont,
Thers quite as good fish in tha say as ever wer knaw'd ta come out ont.

Spoasin yev gammond tha maaid—ither this one or another,
Got on the blind zide o' zhe, but not of her feyther and mother:
Ef yo wants she ta come out (she mid be afeard vor to jog, man),
Dooant ye goo whistlin about, as ef yo wer caalin a dog, man.
Stiddily walk by tha house, as ef yo wer aairin yer cloas, man;
Ef yo da wisel at all—wissel a tune as she knows, man;
Goo wer yev met her befoor, and ef tha policemun dooant mind ye,
Waait till the cooast es all clear and tes ten to one but she'll vind ye.

Spoasen yev miad et aal squar—spoase you'm invited ta caal, man,
Goo in as bould as tha brass, hitch up yer hat in the hall, man.
Mind and shiake hands wi' 'Papa'—ef tha ould woman be chuff, man,
Tiake her in zummut she likes—a bunch o' nice flowers or zome snuff, man.
Kip on tha blind zide o' she, and thaw et biant she yo be aater,
Coort the ould wooman a bit, tull help ye in coortin tha daaster. . . .
Miake the best use o' yer time—yer cheeap bread and cheese, and yer kisses,
Vor ef thers a lizzium on earth, as Tommy Moor zed, I think this es.

There is a certain 'canniness' about the above advice which suggests the suspicion that 'Agrikler' has not always resided in his beloved west of England; surely, at one period of his career, he must have gone northward, and settled *there* for a considerable time. What he has to say on the

married state, on the other hand, commends itself equally to all men, and did not need an exceptional intelligence to conceive it, although it is true that none but a born poet could have expressed it in such harmonious numbers.

Spoase yev accomplished yer pwint—spoase yev vound out what the ways meent,
 Beginning wi dearly beloved, and endin in coorse
 with amazement.
 Ef yer bad temper and whims yo vind yev got
 moor than yer match in ;
 Ef still o' billin and cooin, yo gets moor o' clain
 and scratchin ;
 Ef yo expected perfection, and vind yev got
 nothin oncommen ;
 Ef what you thought wer a angel turns out vor to
 be but a woman ;
 Ef, like the wisest o' men, a woman yo can't larn
 the waays o' ;
 Ef yo da thenk youn' tuk in—doant be zuch a
 vool as to say zo.

Here, admonished, doubtless, by the reflection that he omitted so important a point in his advice to those about to wed, he expresses a hope that the Benedict has not chosen a creature too wise and good for human nature's daily food.

Marry a woman, becaas—a angel wont suit ye by no
 mians.
 When a angel da marry a man, a circumstans
 not very common,
 She either do moult her wengs, and change vrom
 a bird to a woman ;
 Or else—thaw wi duty and love yo tries very hard
 vor ta bind her,
 She'll vlee to tha wordle above, where yo must
 luk sharp vor ta vind her.
 Angels beant fit to live here—woodenit it zeem
 reather shockin,
 To zee one a-nussin a babby—or weshin—or mendin
 a stockin ?

With respect to the husband's line of conduct, it must, of course, be guided by circumstances ; our author does not pretend to lay down rules for all. He speaks liable to correction, as though he were addressing his wife herself.

Wi regard to the tratement o' wives, I mid be
 right or rong, man ;
 Vor wives be zummut like zider—mooastly zweet
 when thair young, man.
 New zider doant suit ould men. I knawed one as
 stoale zone,
 But et deddient agree wi he, vor a vound et moor
 zweet than houlsome.
 But young men shud hev young wives, and if yev
 the luck ta get her,
 Hev one fresh vrom tha reng, and tha zweeter she
 es the better.
 A woman shud hev a tongue—zom mid prefer a
 tame un ;
 But every man to hes tiaste—Agrikler likes a giame
 un.
 Ef she be jonick and true, or as passon zes fiddle
 us semper ;
 Let her hev plenty of pluck, I'll larn to put up wi
 her temper.
 Et middent come azy at vust ; or reather, I'll zay,
 the fact es,
 Tez azy enough to larn, but divilish hard to practise.
 Vor thaw a woman ull promus to honor and obey,
 man,
 Ef yo expects she ta do zo, best tell her ta hev her own
 waay, man.

This confession of our author's domestic submission appears to have called forth some sneers from his readers, to which he rejoins in the following admirable verses, as wise as Solomon himself ever penned, although expressed with a dissimilarity that extends beyond that of the metre.

I hear zome fellow zay—I doant mention who in
 partikler,
 I beant afeard o' my wife, like this fool Agrikler.
 Ever sence we've been married, I've in subjection
 kipt her,
 Which es actin like a man, and accordin to laa and
 scripter,
 Vor doant tha scripter zaay as she es tha waker
 vessel ?
 Got no peth in her yarm, and can nither fight nor
 wrestle.
 I doant mean ta zaay vrom that, tes zactly tha
 theng to baste her,
 But as long as she es my wife I'll let her know
 which is measter.
 What do I zay to that ?—Well—I'll zay as how
 I've heard ont,
 But as to ets bein a fact, I doant believe a word ont.
 Ef yo be stupid and blind, a nod's as good as a
 wenk—zo,
 I wont zay youm tellin a lie, but own as mebby yo
 think zo.
 Vor makin yer wife afeard, yo mid be an out and
 out rum un,
 But teant in the nater o' thengs vor a man to come
 awver a woman.
 She middent scowld nor scream—she middent fight
 nor scratch ye,
 But of youm the devil hiszef, she'll vind a waay to
 match ye.
 You'll never carry tha daay, wi fears athout any
 feavours,
 Vor strict husbands spwile true wives, and tyrants
 breed desavers.
 Yer wife and yer childern too (ef yo axe tha rayson
 why, man),
 Ef afeard to tell ye tha truth, will be shour to tell
 ye a lie, man,
 Vor ef you be a devil—(we doant get fegs vrom
 briars),
 Yer childern ull teake aater you, vor tha devil's
 tha feather o' liars.

There are a number of quaint stories in this little volume, for the materials of which our author owns he is indebted to others, but he tells them humorously and well in his peculiar diction. 'The Bull and the Frog' is excellent ; and Sir Walter Scott's well-known story of an Irishman's linen is most pleasantly told under the name of 'A Taile of a Zhirt.'

The king who had got all that heart could wish for, yet couldn't be happy, had tried every recipe for being so :

He'd zent vor a lot o' docturs (ad got zome money
 to vool away),
 Doctor Cockle and Doctor Parr, Doctor Morrison,
 Doctor Holloway ;
 And thiic Jarman doctur, too, as a Scotchmun ud
 caal a canny man,
 The shugger-plum doctur, I mean, thiic doctur—
 Doctor Hannymann,
 As works zome wunderful cures, or othergues makes girt slaughter,
 Wi' a half a shugger-plum mixd in about dree
 hogsheads o' waater.
 And, unless yo shud tiake too much, gies to ye wi
 this warnin :

'A drap and a half at night, and half a drap in tha mornin.'
And ef it doant cure yer complaistant, and act, as thay zes, like a charm,
Of one theng yo mid be sartain—teant likely to do ye noo harm.

Doctur Lansut and Doctur Leech wer then in girt renown,
And thay bleedud un in the yarm, and thay bleedud un furder down;

And yet he was not happy.

Then, when the docturs ded faail—a sarcumstance not uncommon,
Hes majesty's last resorcee, wer the advice of zome ould ooman,
Zes she : 'Thers one theng ull cure yer majesty in a crack,
Get the shirt of a happy man, and hev un warm vrom hes back;
You'll be happy as tha daay, when once yo gets inzide o'n,
Vor the shirt of a happy man, no blue-devil can abide un.'

In accordance with the accepted story, his majesty goes to Rome, to Paris, to Berlin, and though finding many garments 'meade o' tha vinest o' linnin,' does not discover the article he is in search of—the shirt of a happy man. Even in England he is still unfortunate.

For aalthaw John Bull wer rich, a werdnt a bit content,
Vor heh money wer laayin dead, or vetchin but two per cent.
And that ded miake he onhappy—our constitution es zuch,
That, next iuuss to hevin too littel, es hevin a littel too much.
And, to hev too much or too littel, ull get a man into a bother,
And I never met wi' one yet as werdnt in one claise or tother.
Zo tha Keng, disappwinted once moor, saail'd on vor tha Isle cauld tha greeny un,
And theer a ded meet wi' a chap—I niddent zay twerdnt no Fenian.
Twer Pat, in his best and wust close, jest comd out vor a holiday,
Wi' plenty o' whisky, be shour, hevin a regular jolly daay.
And now, jest to siave myzelf trouble, and nither to alter or blot,
I'll gie ye tha rest o' tha tail in tha rhymes of Zur Walter Scott.
'That's tha chap!' zed tha Keng; 'ketch hould—doant do tha poor bagger noo hurt,
But will he, or nill he, by ALLAH I'll hev thi Irishmун's zhurt,'
'Shillelagh!' the Irishmун zed; 'yer plan I'll zoon be affer baulkin;'
Much less provocation sometimes, ud zet the whole ket on un walkin.
But tha odds as ud Hercules foil, wer too much vor poor Paddy Whack,
Vor thay pull'd off hes cooat by maain foorce, but when thay had stripped un, alack!
Tha vust happy man as they vound had 'niver a shirt' to hes back.

'Agrikler' uses too many italics, and is sometimes a little coarser than is necessary ; but he is an amusing writer, and a great deal of sound sense underlies his fun. The book would be worth reading if it were written in good English ; but we

repeat that this is one of the few exceptional cases in which a local dialect is excusable, and heightens the humour of which it is the vehicle.

A NERVOUS TRAVELLER.

THOSE of you who had the pleasure of living in the country four years ago, know how remarkably hot the weather was. Flies and wasps, bees and spiders, struggling for their lives in an ocean of tepid cream, tea-kettles boiling without being put on the fire, haystacks burning of their own accord—these were some of the horrors which characterised the summer of 1868.

But if England was *hot*, Russia was hotter. The temperature was often so high, that India was left, speaking literally, in the *shade*. It was dangerous to venture out in the sun in the middle of the day ; it was spontaneous liquefaction to put one foot before the other. When you tried to put your boots on, you found them full of beetles, who had gone there for the sake of a little shelter. When you *had* got them on, you called, with all the little voice you had left, for two men and a boot-jack to pull them off again. All the world stood still, or *sat* still, or *lay* still, and gave itself up to its fate. You had not the energy to abuse even the mosquito which perched itself on the end of your celestial nose. If you brushed it away, it returned in a moment or two with several lively friends, who converted your face into a battlefield, and dug trenches, soon to be filled with human gore and their own shattered remains. And so you may imagine that I found it no pleasant prospect, in the midst of these annoyances, to contemplate a railway journey from St Petersburg to Berlin. Moreover, as I was only just recovering from a severe illness—brought on by drinking incautiously some of the detestable river-water—I was not in the most charming temper or in the highest spirits. Behold me, however, seated on a four-wheeled drosky, without springs, with a large trunk behind me, and a small hat-box before me, speeding towards the railway station ; the strong, wiry little Russian horses pulling with a will, in spite of the fierce glare of the sun ; the driver emitting oaths, mingled with a strong odour of onions, Russian leather, sheepskin, and stale tobacco ; the passenger holding on for his life, of which he had not much left. At last the station is reached ; porters rush forward ; away goes my luggage ; away goes the drosky on its return passage, the driver suspecting that change will be asked for.

There being only two trains during the day which run through to Berlin, you may imagine that they were usually well filled with passengers. After taking my ticket, I took a survey of the compartments. They were all occupied. Just as I had decided on going into one of them, which held four persons, I was asked, in French, by a man evidently excited and hurried, whether this was the train for the continent. I replied in the affirmative, and he, a friend of his, and myself, took our seats. The whistle sounds, and we start. Let me here explain to you the construction of the carriages, which differ from those of both England and America. A door opens in the middle of the side of the carriage. On entering this door you go straight forward for about a yard ; to the right and

left of you are two other passages, at the ends of each of them being a door. The doors open into compartments extending the whole width of the carriage, and capable of seating about eight persons each. Facing the main entrance is a small *coupé* to hold four people. You will understand, then, that, supposing the middle compartment to be empty, persons occupying the two *end* compartments are separated from one another by two doors and a long passage—this renders it impossible to overhear what is said or done in either place. If you will keep this in mind, you will readily understand what I am about to relate to you. I examined my two companions over the top of a newspaper. One was a fair, tall, strongly-built man, with moustache and beard; the other, dark, with rather the air of a Frenchman about him. Both were well, yet plainly dressed, but with an amazing profusion of rings on their fingers, set with diamonds, evidently of great value, or else of no value at all.

The survey was, on the whole, then, satisfactory, and I buried myself in my paper once more, when, to my astonishment, I heard the dark man say to his friend, in plain, unmistakable English: ‘It is fortunate that we have secured a compartment with so much room in it.’ I cannot tell you how much pleased I was once more to have the opportunity of speaking a little English, and I soon joined in the conversation. They seemed at first affable, but soon, no doubt, felt the natural distrust which is so characteristic of John Bull on his travels. However, it turned out that although they spoke English, it was here and there interspersed with a slight smattering of ‘Artemus Wardism.’ They both belonged to the northern states, and our reserve soon wore off as we argued out the respective claims of Federals and Confederates. I need not tell you that both my companions had travelled a great deal. I never met an American who had not!

They had gone to the very extremity of the line of rail which was then being laid down from Moscow to the East. They had slept with the workmen in the open air, and snored away quite calmly among a horde of semi-barbarians. Of course, one of them had been to Jerusalem to see how they were getting on with the excavations there. We got on well together, and were on sufficiently intimate terms at the end of the day to agree to sleep in the same carriage. The windows were double, and only half of the double window would open; the seats were thickly cushioned. The sun had been shining in through the double glass upon our unfortunate heads, so that we were only too glad to solace ourselves with iced beer and execrable claret at the few stations we saw. For miles and miles we went on through thick forests, without seeing a single house. And then the evening came; and after the sun had set, the air seemed almost as sultry as before. We dined together, and then adjourned to an end compartment of another carriage. A lamp had been lighted in it, and there was a curtain, which, when drawn over the lamp, rendered the carriage almost dark. Soon after we left the station where we had dined, a sudden glare of light burst upon us; we felt the train quickening its speed, and a moment or two we were overpowered by a suffocating smoke. We closed the windows, and found that the forest on each side of us was in flames.

Long tongues of fire darted out here and there, and scorched the carriages. If I were an adept at word-painting, I would attempt to describe the scene, but it was far beyond anything I could make you feel or understand. A quarter of a mile or so of this, and we left the fire behind us, only too thankful to have escaped so easily.

And now we began to make our preparations for going to sleep. My two fellow-travellers were evidently old hands at this sort of thing. They took off their coats, and folded them into pillows; their collars and ties were neatly pinned to the wall of the carriage; slippers replaced their boots; and after spreading a large silk handkerchief over their coats by way of a pillow-case, and getting out their travelling rugs, they were ready for bed. In the netting over my head was placed a small carpet-bag belonging to the latter man of the two, whom I will call Douglas. He and Brookes, his companion, lay down on the seat opposite to me, thus leaving me the other seat all to myself; Brookes with his head next to the window, and his face towards me; I with my face turned towards him, so close that I could almost have touched him. Douglas lay on the opposite seat, with his head next the other window, and also facing me. This prolix statement is necessary to make you understand my story. Under my head was an overcoat, in the pocket of which reposed a six-barrelled revolver, an old travelling companion, so that by merely putting my hand under my head, I could place my finger on the trigger. However, scarcely a feeling of suspicion crossed my mind. Douglas asked me if I objected to having the curtain drawn over the lamp. ‘Of course not.’ This done, we could just see one another, but very indistinctly. Then he lay down again, and there was a dead silence.

The train went on and on, not a house to be seen through the thick forests. Suddenly a thought flashed upon me: ‘What would be easier than to rob a man, and throw him out of the window? He would lie in the forest, and soon the wolves would find him out, and disperse all traces of him, eating his seal-skin waistcoat with as much relish as his carcass.’ I laughed to myself. ‘How absurd this is,’ said I. ‘I have no reason for suspecting these men.’ True, they had been whispering together, and their rings were rather too numerous. ‘But what a fool I am. I will go to sleep; at anyrate, I am tired enough.’

I had scarcely closed my eyes, when, in the stillness, I heard a sharp quick sound—‘click.’ I held my breath, and listened; every nerve strained to the utmost. ‘That sounds to me very much like the sound of a pistol being cocked. Absurd; no one carries pistols now. Americans, especially, always carry revolvers.’ Again, click. ‘This is the second time,’ I thought. Still not a trace of any movement. The rug under which Douglas was sleeping at the other end of the carriage, and from which the sound came, did not move. I noiselessly passed my hand under my head, and felt for my six-shooter. Thank God, it was there. I grasped it, and laid my finger on the trigger; and thinking of the favourite plan of shooting a man through one’s pocket, I turned the muzzle of my trusty friend towards Douglas. All this without speaking a word.

‘He will have the first shot, at anyrate,’ thought I; ‘but I shall be able to return it before he has

fired a second. But alone with two men, who are doubtless armed, I shall have a poor chance.' I cannot tell you the rapidity with which the thoughts went through my mind—thoughts of sin unabsolved, strangely intermingled with others of calm, unpitying hate towards my enemy. But I remained silent. Once more a sharp click. I nearly fired—thank God, I did not—and then again, click, click, click, in quick succession. 'Ah, my friend,' thought I, 'I see what you are about; you are turning your revolver round, in order to place the caps on the nipples.' And again, click, click. I could not help it. I strung myself up to the task, and asked with a cold calmness which makes me almost shudder to think of it: 'What the devil is that noise?'

'I am only winding up my watch!'

What an idiot I am, and doubtless you will all concur in the statement. Very well; wait a little. I immediately wound up my own watch, which had been forgotten, and determined to go to sleep. 'What is the use of all these absurd suspicions?' I reasoned.

At last, with my hand on my revolver, I went to sleep. I slept well, but awoke suddenly. No! Yes! There, as plain as possible, stood Douglas by my side. The hammer of my revolver was raised within a hair's-breadth of the point at which it would fall and strike the cap. Should I fire or not?

In the dead of night, to be roused suddenly from one's sleep is startling, but to see a man stooping over you when you *do* awake, is decidedly very startling indeed, especially if you have reason to suspect him of bad intentions.

And now, with my finger pressed firmly upon the trigger, but without any attempt to leap to my feet, as I had at first thought of doing, I watched him. He looked hard at me. I did not move, and then I saw him take out something which glittered in the moonlight: *it was a key*. And then he leaned over me. Then said I with a feeling of rage in my heart: 'What on earth are you doing?'

He was so startled, that he almost fell backwards. This sudden movement nearly made me fire; and then he answered: 'I am only going to take something out of my bag.'

This bag, as I told you, was in the netting over my head; hence he was obliged to lean over me to reach it. I said, very bad-temperedly: 'Take it down, then.' He muttered to himself, and got the bag down. He little thought that there was only a hair's-breadth between him and death. If he could have looked through my rug, he would have seen the muzzle of my revolver pointed to his heart.

He turned aside, keeping an eye on me all the while, and took something from his bag. What it was, I could not see. Then he went back and lay down, and all was still. What was it he had taken from his bag? I could not sleep; I dared not turn my back to them both. They lay so quietly without a sound of breathing that I was sure they were not asleep. At length, by way of hastening matters, I pretended to sleep; I breathed heavily; I do not know whether I did not give a snore. However, nothing happened. I grew more and more sleepy; I was worn out, ill as I was, with the fatigues of my long journey. Soon, however, the train stopped. This was the

only station at which we should pause for the next six or seven hours. I got a strong cup of coffee, and returned. I was determined not to change into another carriage; I was determined to conquer these foolish feelings, no doubt created by the wretched state of my nerves.

I opened the door of my compartment, and paused for a moment near to the seat where Douglas was lying. That moment, as I afterwards found, nearly cost me my life. With a voice like thunder, Douglas leaped to his feet, and asked me what I was doing.

With inexpressible politeness, I answered that I had been into the station: I wondered if he wished to pick a quarrel with me.

He did not reply, except by a surly grumble. I went and lay down as before; I could not keep awake. At last, giving myself up to my fate, I turned my face to the wall of the carriage, and with my revolver in my hand, went off into a sound sleep. The next morning came. Went into the station and performed our scanty ablutions together. And then, all looking very tired, and very thankful that day had come, we gradually began to talk with civility to one another.

Douglas asked me what kind of a night I had passed.

I laughed and said: 'Not a very good one.'

'For my part,' said he, 'I did not sleep a wink the whole night.'

At last, the whole reason of these alarms came out. The night before, when we were getting ready for bed, he had noticed the butt of my revolver sticking out of my pocket. This aroused his suspicions. He began, as I had done, to think over what might happen. He thought of me at Baden-Baden with his bank-notes, and of himself lying out in the woods, and of the affection those wolves would have for a full-sized American; and so his nerves were shaky, just as mine had been. His suspicions were also aroused by the way in which I had asked what the noise was when he was winding up his watch.

At last he could not rest, and, going very gently and with great caution, lest he should arouse the slumbering lion with the revolver, he unlocked his bag, and drew out of it a formidable six-shooter also. He knew of the plan of firing without exposing one's weapon to sight, and expected, he said, to feel my bullet every moment as he stood exposed with his arms raised to the netting over my head. Then, when I came in from the station, he was suddenly aroused from a doze, and it was with the greatest difficulty, for a moment, that he refrained from firing. Had either of us given way to our first impulse, we should probably have gone on firing our six barrels at one another until one of us could fire no longer, and then the other would have had to pop the body through the window, and say no more about it, and, whether confessing the fact or not, have run a good chance of being sent off to the mines of Siberia without any more questions being asked. After a mutual explosion of laughter, we became excellent friends, and travelled together in much harmony to Berlin.

The moral I draw from this adventure is, a word and a blow, but the word first.